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## THE LARGER HIGH SCHOOL

THE thoughtful student of the times must recognize that we are now entering on a new era in high-school education. The high school of five years ago was not the same as the better high school of today, and that which is today is but the intimation of the greater and grander mission to which the high school is readjusting itself. Then, a privileged few pupils, through courses of study of limited differentiation and opportunity, had recognition of their wants. The manner of instruction was typified by the so-called laboratory where the instructor performed marvelous feats on a few pieces of costly apparatus for the curiosity and amusement of the class. The superfine air-pump or electrical machine at other times was carefully locked away from plebeian touch or else became the demolished object of a center rush when the instructor was out of the room. The hours of study were abnormal, the regular school session being appropriated largely by the teacher, the immature pupil working late into the night to accommodate the talkative teacher during the day.

All of this not more than five years ago, or at most not more than ten. But since then there has been tremendous advancement. The old-time school man, who, hostile to any change, felt he served his generation best by sitting as an executor on some bequeathed educational estate, is arousing himself to the spirit of the times. The aristocracy of the pupils who can is giving way more and more to the democracy of those who may. In the days of glorious Greece, it is said, "every free man stood on the backs of nine slaves." To continue the metaphor of President David Starr Jordan, "part of the achievement of the time consisted in keeping the nine men down that the tenth man might be raised aloft." This, true in civic Greece, has also been too much true in education. The high school has been constructed too largely for those who knew they were predestinated for college graduation and for a limited kind of professional life.

The attendance has been proportionately small because the great common people knew there was little conservation of the great economic demands of their own lives and never reached the possibilities of the college because discouraged they turned away from the narrow threshold of the average high school. Much, much has been done to carefully grade the high school and to elevate it into a realm of classical honor; but every attempt, in this country, to raise the standard of the high school has resulted in smaller numbers and has lifted it just that much away from the people.

During the past few years the presence of a large commercial school in a city has demonstrated the fact that the high school has not completely filled its mission. The large educational classes of the Young Men's Christian Associations have added another chapter of the same story. The last annual report of the Massachusetts State Board of Education, showing that in the ten largest cities of the state only one fifth of the pupils of the entire enrollment continued in school long enough to participate in the enjoyment of the high school, is a substantiation of the criticism made by Dr. Washington Gladden twenty years ago. But we are now in the beginning of an era in high school improvement, the greatest factor of which is due to the scientific study of children, emanating from the great throbbing heart of Clark University and giving an enlightened conscience, which is awakening a democratic people to the differentiated demands of life. Following this, and indeed largely correlated with it, is the enormous interest the great woman's club movement is taking in this question. This influence, which the better women of America are bringing to bear on the schools, is simply tremendous. When the woman gets after the man or the school man he would better capitulate; and this he is now doing.

Under influences of this kind the high school of New England is rapidly transforming itself. The magnificent new buildings at Springfield, Holyoke, Fitchburg, Brookline, Newton, Fall River, Pittsfield, and Somerville, with provisions and equipment that would have dwarfed a college fifty years ago, are all intimations of the trend of desire among the people and are

prophetic of a line of high school policy far more comprehensive than that of the school of a few years ago. Just where this will lead us matters not, but it will surely be in the interests of democracy. The high school of the future must and will reach larger numbers than it has ever done in the past. It will be the school of the common people. It will be in touch with all of the demands of life.

Concerning it may be said,

I. *It will be a comprehensive school.*—Doubtless, the classics will still have their large enrollment of numbers; but new elements, under encouragement, will appear in the high school and will call for other departments of training. The purely classical school was, in type, established in mediaeval days when it was taken for granted that the student was to be a clergyman or a gentleman. While this type of school has high merit which cannot be questioned it does not cover the entire field. Others, besides the special classes, are to be educated. The greatest promise in all economic life lies in lifting all the trades and vocations of life into a realm of higher activity and their devotees into the enrichment of personal culture. The great scientific world has opened up so enormously; its practical applications in life and its contributions to the greater productiveness, enrichment, culture and enjoyment of man have so expanded themselves; the methods of scientific study have so improved, and the opportunities for its prosecution are so abundant, that science now stands entitled to a place in the curricula of schools of preëminent importance.

Then there are the Mechanic Arts, to be taught not as a preparation for the trades, but as a higher means in the development of creative faculty. Man often is an imitator, but he should be a creator. The realm of invention is so limitless, the transformation of energy and the extraction of much from little so distinguishing of man above brute, that creative faculty, which most makes man like God, excepting in moral possibility, must have training in the school—not schools for the making of things, but through the making of things for the development of men and women who are to create, to transform and to execute.

So also of the Fine Arts. To see, to hear, to understand, to interpret, to color, to reproduce, to create—these are the possibilities of the school, above all servile imitation and of value in proportion as they reach to such higher level.

Then, there is necessary an acquaintance with certain tools and forms of business life. If bookkeeping, typewriting and stenography are at all necessary to any number of young people, then they have their legitimate place in the high school.

Underlying all these must be adequate provision for the grace and glory of physical health. Parallel with every line of study must be training in the scientific gymnasium, not by exercise once or twice per week, but daily and of regularity. Only as we train young people to the necessity of regular physical exercise will they be keepers of their own health and have the keys to strength in their possession.

So then, all the demands of modern life must have their anticipation in the school. If Professor Dewey's definition is true that the school is "not a preparation for life but life itself," then the school must be as broad as life; and all the educative needs of young people, be such needs in classics, belles-lettres, the humanities, science, industry, and art, must be comprehended in the provisions of the high school.

Doubtless, in this we are all agreed; but I cannot look, excepting with disfavor, on the growing tendency to the segregation into separate schools, the so-called and monopolistic classical school, the English school, the manual-training school, the commercial school, etc., each accommodated in a separate building. The fundamental purposes of all these departments of work so overlap and interchange that they should forever be closely associated. The recognition of special honor accorded one school, and the "depart from hope all ye who enter here" written on the entire surroundings of others, are hostile to that greater democratic spirit which seeks to honor all life and to carry culture into every trade.

The comprehensive school, then, should be a school as broad as life, and it should forever conserve the community of interests that must underlie all the departments of education of younger

life. Preferably such a school should be under one roof and under a single management.

II. *There should be the most liberal opportunity for the election of studies.*—If the student wishes to begin the preparatory work of the classical college, it should be his privilege. If he wishes to enter the polytechnic school, it should be with the most liberal encouragement. If his friend is more decidedly scientific or along the line of the mechanical or domestic arts or the fine arts, or if his needs are for office bookkeeping, typewriting, and stenography, he should find in the school the exact counterpart of his needs, and that under circumstances of the most generous correlation and the greatest ease of readjustment. The course of study has its proper place, but it should be a living, growing thing, of the widest possible adaptation to individual needs. Oh, when shall the programs of our great educational gatherings cease to be filled with the discussion of the necessity of uniform courses of study, uniformity in college entrance requirements and the like! Uniformity is an educational curse which violates every principle of God and nature and should forever be banished from the schools. It matters not for how many different colleges preparation is to be made, the future of the student should be anticipated and find conservation in specific adaptation for his work. Given, the school where the specific wants of the students and not the predilection of the teacher have first consideration, and it is almost as easy to prepare for twenty colleges as for one. But even then, all pupils do not go on to college; and, hence, the differentiation of needs is more pronounced. If the “school is life” and is to be as broad as life, it must fit all of these cases. One school at least has attempted this—perhaps there are many more. There is no hesitation in saying that, if in the course of time five hundred pupils graduate from this school, it will have been possible for these five hundred persons to have come to their graduation through five hundred different courses of study.

This in time does away with the necessity for the careful classification of pupils into classes with intervals one year apart. It does away with the false un-American sentiment that honors the

aristocracy of the college constituency and degrades the honest plebeian life that cannot aspire so high. It opens the doors of the school to the masses and seeks the enrichment of the common man.

The methods of the school that is to be must be largely laboratory methods, adapted for every department of study. The pupil must have opportunity, under direction and encouragement, to do his own work. His rate of progress must be his own. If he can cover the usual course of study in four years, very well. If he can profitably place five years or even six on his work, or if he can do it in three years or even two, it must be his privilege. If he can carry the full course of daily work, so much the better; but, if because of sickness or unusual life demands he can carry only three studies or two or even one, then every principle of educational economy demands he should be given permission to do so. Any system of schools that conserves only the possibilities of certain pupils is a direct perversion of the uses of the people's money. The school must be as broad as life.

III. *Again, given its clientage, the school must be responsible for results.*—No physician has the right to charge on others the responsibility of an assumed case; and no more right has the teacher to evade the results of inadequate or injudicious school administration. The scholarship record sent in many schools to the home is a measurement of the teacher and not of child. Furthermore, no teacher has the right to permit insurmountable difficulties to accumulate before the student. They must be cleared out of the way as the daily work goes on. To permit difficulties to accumulate until the pupil suddenly finds he is not promoted or must drop out of the school is educationally criminal. Non-promotion! There should never be such a thing. The pupil has a divine right to healthy normal progress, in which the close of the year should make losses no more than any day of the year. His work should be continuous work, with no interruption because of the mechanism of the school. To be non-promoted or to be conditioned and to be discouraged where-withal, what a reflection on the teacher who assumes the training of a child! The school then must be responsible for results.

IV. *The school should be the place for the doing of school work.*—I cannot understand how the high school, with all of its generous financial provisions, ever degenerated into an institution where nearly all the hours of session were spent in one prolonged recitation, largely for the detection of delinquencies and for the teacher's benefit, while the growing, adolescent boy or girl was crowded into abnormal hours at home for the doing of work which should have had the best hours of the day. I cannot look with favor on the present general custom which presents a single session for high-school instruction. To require an active pupil to sit largely passive through the long recitation is bad enough indeed; but when this pupil rushes to school in the morning, half fed, because of inadequate time to breakfast, and then drags through five hours of sometimes unrelieved torture, to return home too late for the comfortable meal which others of the family have had, and then to be forced to do desultory study amidst the distracting circumstances of home life or by bad light through many evening hours, the situation, it seems to me, has little apology to offer to an intelligent board of health.

Again, there may be circumstances of home life which limit attendance at the early morning hour and perhaps thereby deny the privileges of high-school education. Even these persons are entitled to consideration.

There was a day when even the church kept open hours only one day of the week and then only at certain hours, while its industrious opponent closed its doors never. We are now entering the era of the institutional church with provision for the masses at almost any hour of the day. The Young Men's Christian Association, the Young Woman's Association, the Christian Union, the Societies of the Catholic Church, the Guilds, are all in exposition of this modern idea. In the same way must the high school come to the realization that its doors must be open during a larger number of hours during the day. Opportunity for favorable study demands it. Laboratory work in every study demands it. Home requirement demands it. Sanitary science demands it. I do not mean that the present high tension school should extend itself over a greater number of hours per day;



but the school must be open to the student; the teacher must be more approachable; the day must be more porous; the pupil must have the school laboratory for his work; the demand for evening study must be discontinued. This in time would transform the entire policy and practice of the school.

V. *The high school under the same director and heads of departments, but not necessarily under the same teachers, must be open in the evening as well as during the day.*—The fact that a young man or a young woman must work in the mill or store should not deny him or her the opportunity for high school or college instruction. If those who are supported by others are entitled to the city educational provision, certainly they who support others have an equally just claim. Every attempt in this country to open an evening high school has met a response far beyond all expectation. These deserving young people have their claims on the high school. If they cannot come for the day session, the night session must be their privilege. For this teachers should be supplied, but the plan should be a part of the high school and not be relegated to circumstances of unfavorable conditions.

VI. *But the present times are making new demands upon the high school.*—The broad, generous movement begun in the interest of college extension is transferring itself with larger mission to the domain of the people's college. The tremendous activity in literary club life, particularly among the women, and the results of society and private enterprise, all are making of the high school a follower, where it should have been a leader. I have not time now to discuss the necessity of high-school studies being permitted earlier; but this much is certain, the high school should supplement itself and extend itself to do all the good it can in its community. Better than any other institution, it is prepared to direct all the higher intellectual activities of those who from the homes seek opportunities for directed studies. If graduates of the high school wish to continue certain lines of work; if older persons of neglected or denied past opportunities, but now awakened to the needs and privileges of the hour, come forward for help; if community classes are to be

formed for study in literature, history, economics, art, domestic science, and kindred branches ; then the high school must arise to the privilege of such opportunity, widen its scope of usefulness, and make itself felt in this direction of educational endeavor. This is now being done with glorious results in Brookline, and the good work begun there is extending itself into other places.

Nothing perhaps will do more to improve the quality of the high school and to make public a demonstration of the need of well-trained and capable teachers than this movement which will certainly place the high school and its needs in a highly favorable light before the people.

VII. *There is still another department of usefulness before the high school, and that is in the presentation of a systematic course of popular but instructive lectures for the masses.*—The great work done in this particular in New York City is very suggestive. The courses of instructive lectures for the industrial classes in Birmingham, Lancaster, and other industrial centers in England, the high success of the Chautauqua gatherings are all indicative of what may be done in this particular. If education can be brought to the masses in this way, then the high school has a wider mission than that of a preparatory or even a finishing school. To be worthy of the enormous sums of money that are now being expended for buildings and equipment, it must rise to the privilege of this great opportunity.

Doubtless this calls for the gradual reconstruction of the high-school teaching force. Their principals must be men who could grace a college presidential chair. The heads of departments must be leaders of the people. The teachers must be prepared to arise to greater usefulness. Perhaps the reflex of all this, in its lifting of the atmosphere and plane of work of the regular high school, will be the best part of the whole movement.

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Such, in brief, is the mission of the coming high school. Nothing in all the realm of American education is more interesting to the student than the development of the high school. Its supplanting the old time-honored and exceedingly useful New England Academy ; the marvelous development, first in the West

and then in the East, until now the high school practically does the work of the college of fifty years ago; the growing change of the college into the university and school for specialized training; these and other evolutions in the growth of American institutions indicate that the high school of today is to become the college of yesterday, and that, utilizing the opportunities brought to its door and creating others for itself, the high school is to become an institution of far wider usefulness as the director of all the higher educational advancement of the great common people. This, then, is my apology for presenting to the reading public this discussion of the Mission of the Larger High School.

PRESTON W. SEARCH